
This is the **published version** of the bachelor thesis:

Kropsu, Laura; Codó, Eva, dir. Critical Discourse Analysis : media representations of Career Woman. 2019. 37 pag. (801 Grau en Estudis Anglesos)

This version is available at <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/210779>

under the terms of the  license



**Universitat Autònoma
de Barcelona**

DEPARTAMENT DE FILOLOGIA ANGLESA I DE GERMANÍSTICA

Critical Discourse Analysis: Media Representations of Career Women

Treball de Fi de Grau / BA Dissertation

Author: Laura Oona Katariina Kropsu

Supervisor: Eva Codó Olsina

Grau d'Estudis Anglesos

May 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Eva Codó, for assisting me throughout the process of both planning and writing this paper. Additionally, I appreciate my closest friends and family for always being there for me when life gets stressful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Literature review	2
2.1 Critical discourse analysis	3
2.1.1 Fairclough's framework	5
2.2 Representations of women in the media.....	6
2.3 Representations of career women in the media.....	9
3. Empirical study: data description	13
3.1 Methodology: focal analytical features	14
4. Findings	16
5. Discussions and conclusions	20
6. References	24
Appendix	26

Abstract

The current study is a Critical Discourse Analysis that scrutinised how career women were represented in the European edition of an online magazine called *Entrepreneur*. Three articles published between November 2018 and December 2018 were chosen for the analysis, all derived from a section called *Women Entrepreneur*. Fairclough's (1989, 2003) three dimensional approach was used as a theoretical framework, the focus being on the first two stages, description and interpretation. Using Van Leeuwen's (1996) and Fairclough's (2003) texts as guidelines, linguistic aspects chosen for inspection were role allocation, exclusion and inclusion, as well as lexical choices and their connotations. The results showed that despite the aim of the magazine seemed to be to empower career women, they were also victimised and represented as passive, emotional and insecure in the articles. Additionally, gender differences, as well as the fact that career and family life cannot be combined, were aspects emphasised in the texts.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Representations of Women, Career Women, Media Discourse, Business Magazines, Gendered Discourse

1. Introduction

Although advancements have been made over the years, the battle for gender equality is still ongoing in today's world. Language is tightly connected to this issue, as it reflects society's values, and research has concluded that it has an effect on how we see the world and how we think (Boroditsky, 2009). In particular, there is a large body of research about media discourse. People are exposed to the influence of the media very frequently, and as Wood states, "of the many influences on how we view men and women, media are the most pervasive and one of the most powerful" (1994: 231).

There are various forms of inequality, one of them being the different treatment that the genders receive in society. Regarding media discourse, Risbourg mentions in her critical discourse analysis that every study she inspected "claimed that gender inequality is still present in the media, either by underrepresentation of women or by their misrepresentation" (2018: 11). Evident examples of this can be seen in advertising: a tendency to represent women in an overly sexualized and stereotyped manner persists, as proven by many studies (Wood 1994; Zotos and Tsihla 2014; Jansson and Sahlin 2015). An equally important but less studied matter is how career women in particular are portrayed in media discourse by means of different linguistic and visual tools. Feminism being on the agenda, and workplace gender inequality still persisting for instance in the form of the gender pay gap, this particular topic is an important one to explore if the goal is to achieve equality between the genders. The way career women are talked about in the media shows the direction that the society as a whole is going in because media has immense power over its consumers.

Consequently, the objective of this paper is to investigate how professional women are represented in media discourse by considering existing research carried out on the topic, as well as on media representations of women in general. Additionally, an empirical study will be

conducted analysing an online magazine - European edition of *Entrepreneur*. The three articles chosen for analysis were written between November 2018 and December 2018, and are from a section called *Women Entrepreneur*. Using Fairclough's (1989, 2003) three dimensional approach as a tool, linguistic aspects of discourse, namely inclusion and exclusion, lexical choices and role allocation, will be analysed as an attempt to reveal patterns of career woman constructions in the media. As there are not many previous studies on the topic, and some are not recent ones, the aim is to provide an account that is up to date. Three articles of different types were chosen for the analysis, so that a more general picture could be acquired. The representations are not solely constructed by third parties from afar, since a woman's voice is heard in each of the articles. Despite the limited data considered when conducting the analysis, some general and tentative conclusions will be drawn about the construction of career women in the media.

2. Literature review

The following section will present previous studies relevant to the current one. As there is little research on career women representations in particular, and because it is important to set the stage for the specific subject matter, some studies about representations of women in the media in general are included before centring on studies about the specific topic of my research. Additionally, by inspecting studies about the wider context, it is arguably easier to detect recurrent patterns of representation.

This collection of research presented includes different types of methodologies; however, most of them approach their topics from the angle of Critical Discourse Analysis. It is the umbrella term for more specific methodologies, and also used in my empirical research. Therefore, the first subsection will focus on this main approach of analysis, as well as on the

more specific approach that is used as a tool: Fairclough's three dimensional framework (1989, 2003).

2.1 Critical discourse analysis

Both my empirical research, and many of the previous studies reviewed in these following sections use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the main theoretical paradigm. Therefore, it is crucial to consider in detail what CDA actually is, how it came about, and what kinds of topics it is used with. Additionally, the question of why critical analysis of texts is important, especially when it comes to media discourse, is explored.

Although the critical theory of the Frankfurt School stated the earliest principles of CDA before the 1940s, the study of discourse and language stems from critical linguistics, a field that surfaced at the end of the 1970s (Van Dijk, 2001). Nowadays, these two terms are more or less synonymous in meaning, but CDA seems to be used more frequently in recent research (Wodak, 2009). In the early 1990s, a group of scholars developed ideas of methodology for the analysis of discourse. This said group included Fairclough, Van Dijk and Van Leeuwen, who have all made great contributions in this area of research (Wodak, 2009).

CDA studies language not in isolation but tightly connected to the social context: Van Dijk emphasises the fact that discourse is "inherently part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction" (2001: 352). Fairclough explains this by stating that "there is not an external relationship 'between' language and society, but an internal and dialectical relationship. Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena" (1989: 23). Ideology and power are key concepts that come up frequently in relation to CDA. Language is a powerful tool that affects ideologies, and in turn, ideologies also have an effect on language. For the most

part, these processes happen implicitly. Therefore, discourse has to be inspected in detail in order to expose ideologies that govern today's society and its opinions. According to Van Dijk, CDA "studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (2001: 352). Indeed, CDA focuses on social problems, and therefore it is a logical framework when it comes to the inspection of gender inequality, racism or minority issues.

Media discourse has been studied a lot from the point of view of CDA, first on a surface level, the focus being on easily distinguishable aspects of language, and later more critically and thoroughly (Van Dijk, 2001). As mentioned before, power is an important notion when it comes to CDA, since media has implicit power over its consumers. This is why media and power are frequently studied by means of this approach. Fairclough connects the two concepts by stating that "[m]ass-media discourse is interesting because the nature of the power relations enacted in it is often not clear, and there are reasons for seeing it as involving hidden relations of power" (1989: 49). O'Keeffe emphasises the fact that nothing written in the media is coincidental by claiming that "media discourse is a public, manufactured, on record, form of interaction. It is not ad hoc or spontaneous (in the same way as casual speaking or writing is)" (2011: 441). The power of the media extends beyond individual consumers: it affects the large structures of society as well (Van Dijk, 1995). This power parallels the discrimination and racism happening in reality, because in both cases, it is often implicit. Problematic discursive practices cannot always be easily detected, hence close analysis of texts is crucial.

When it comes to this present paper, society's attitudes regarding career women can be scrutinised through critical analysis of vocabulary, grammar structures and other discursive practices used in the articles about the topic. This study will focus on the first two of those aspects. More specifically, lexical choices and their connotations as well as activation and

passivation of social actors (Van Leeuwen, 1996) will be looked at. Exclusion of elements and social actors will also be inspected, because as mentioned before, media uses language strategically and exclusion “may be politically or socially significant” (Fairclough, 2003: 149). Since power is an important notion in CDA, and women are still in a less powerful role compared to men in today’s society, this approach helps with analysing how masculine hegemony is reinforced in the media.

2.1.1 Fairclough’s framework

Since Critical Discourse Analysis is a broad approach to the study of discourse, a need for a more specific method of analysis arises. Norman Fairclough’s (1989, 2003) framework that consists of three stages is a logical choice because he is one of the most significant figures in the field of CDA. Additionally, his approach to CDA is socio-cultural, which aligns with the nature and the topic of the present study. Fairclough assumes language to be “an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language” (2003: 2).

The first level that Fairclough introduces is description of textual aspects. He accounts that this stage is “a matter of identifying and ‘labelling’ formal features of a text” (Fairclough, 1989: 26). Although this might seem like an objective process, the second level, interpretation, depends on the textual aspects that are chosen to be focused on, and therefore the analyst’s subjective evaluations affect the whole analysis (Fairclough, 1989). The second step that Fairclough introduces consists of the analyst attempting to decode the text by finding meanings and implications behind the words. The interpreter analyses the text in its context, but also on the basis of background assumptions, which makes this stage complex and subjective matter as well. The last of the three levels is explanation of how the wider social context connects to

interaction (Fairclough, 1989). Due to page constraints, the present study will not discuss this stage.

Fairclough divides formal properties of a text into three categories according to their value: experiential, relational and expressive (Fairclough, 1989). This means that all of the three previously mentioned levels can be inspected using these value categories. The first one has to do with how words reflect the ideologies and society's world view. It therefore considers the content of texts, and how that affects knowledge and beliefs. Relational category covers the relations between participants: "there is a trace of and a cue to the social relationships which are enacted via the text in the discourse" (Fairclough, 1989: 112). Expressive values have to do with how the text producer evaluates reality, and they are linked to subjects and social identities (Fairclough, 1989). These subcategories will not be considered in the present research; as mentioned previously, the focus is on mere description and interpretation of textual aspects. Despite only focusing on those two levels, Fairclough's framework proved useful as this gradual manner of analysing enables the focus to be on one step at a time. Additionally, analysis can be made simple but adding further layers is possible if need be.

2.2 Representations of women in the media

There is a large body of research about gender representations in different media outlets. A few of those studies have been chosen for this present paper as examples of the wider context. Since the main topic of inspection is career women, studies regarding them are scrutinised more carefully.

Wood (1994) introduces many earlier studies about gender representations, and reports that there are certain patterns that can be detected when it comes to these depictions. It should be noted that since the study in question is a relatively old one, the results it presents might not

be totally reflective of today's situation. However, even though advancements have been made in recent years, it is probable that many of the findings are still valid, albeit in a less exacerbated way. Indeed, when comparing this article to more contemporary ones, same kinds of patterns can be found.

Firstly, Wood states that men are more visible in the media than women, and outnumber them regardless of the context. This gives a false impression that "men are the cultural standard and women are unimportant or invisible" (1994: 31). Wood points out an issue that is connected to this: the scarcity of females in high positions in the field of media and journalism (Wood, 1994). Also Solomon brings the same issue to the fore: "[T]he absence of female journalists in the decision making position, can delay the process of liberating fellow women from poor coverage and negative portrayal in the media" (Solomon, 2006: 97).

In addition, it seemed that genders were represented through stereotypes. According to Wood, women were portrayed as "sex objects who are usually young, thin, beautiful, passive, dependent, and often incompetent and dumb" (1994: 32). She proceeds by claiming that the contexts women appeared in often had to do with home and children, and working women were represented as very feminine and gentle. Additionally, the "superwoman" nature of women who both work and take care of their families and homes was implied, and conflicts did not seem to occur between these two aspects of life. There were exceptions to the rule, but the overall trend seemed to be that whereas men were represented as independent and dominant, women adopted the role of a submissive and helpless supporting character who are "passive and waiting for men's attention" (Wood, 1994: 34).

Advertising is a form of discourse which has been highly on display in many studies about gender representations in the media. According to Wood, women in advertisements were represented as "sexual objects" (1994: 36), who were very concerned with their looks. Jansson

and Sahlin (2015) analysed advertisements in Mexican fashion magazines and also found that women were frequently portrayed in a sexualised and stereotypical way. However, the stereotypical representations of women as weak and powerless were found to have been replaced by depictions of powerful and perfect-looking women whose sexuality was emphasised. Although the results mainly indicated women to be depicted in the aforesaid way, a contrasting manner of representing the gender was found when it came to women in domestic contexts, who were referred to as “happy housewives” (Jansson and Sahlin, 2015: 53).

Zotos and Tsihla’s (2014) fairly recent study about print advertising also found the stereotyping of women to be an ongoing issue, which further implies that although Wood’s (1994) study is an older one, it seems that society has not changed considerably since her analysis. However, it appeared that stereotyping was done more implicitly than before, “aligning with the notion of benevolent sexism” (Zotos and Tsihla, 2014: 450). By looking at previous research on the topic, Zotos and Tsihla conclude that although there were less representations of women as housewives relying on their husbands, women were still portrayed in “decorative roles” (2014: 450). Additionally, women were not often found in professional contexts, and when they were, they had service occupations rather than high leadership roles.

Conradie analysed how a women’s magazine, namely *Cosmopolitan*, represented women. Firstly, the results showed that women tended to be depicted as a “homogeneous group” (2011: 407). Additionally, it was assumed that women were trapped in a society that expected them to be successful in womanhood, and consequently they needed help in trying to achieve this ideal. The implication was that protesting against these expectations was not a possibility, which “might reinforce the stereotype that women are politically inactive and more concerned with the private sphere of their own lives” (Conradie, 2011: 411). Tiainen’s analysis of the same magazine came to a similar conclusion: women were represented as passive and

mainly taking an interest in their appearance. In addition, women were anticipated to be insecure (Tiainen, 2009).

This present study provides a new kind of point of view to that body of research, since not only does it specifically analyse career women representations, but also the media outlet is different: instead of a women's magazine, a business magazine is examined. This means that the initial assumption is that women appear in contexts that are not domestic ones. Therefore, it is interesting to see whether women in professional contexts are depicted by means of same types of representation patterns as in previous studies.

2.3 Representations of career women in the media

Before concentrating on the present study, previous research about the topic needs to be given importance. These studies vary in terms of specific aspects that were analysed, as well as the type of media outlet that was looked at, but the uniformity of the results seems to imply that there is a prevalent way of representing career women in the media.

A study discussing representations of women in high level positions at work was done about Finnish business media articles in 2002 by Lämsä and Tiensuu. It should be noted that the study in question is not a particularly recent one, a fact that must be taken into account when analysing the results. When comparing articles about women and men leaders, Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002) took notice that women were the only ones who were asked questions related to the advantages or disadvantages of their gender, as well as about inequality in the workplace. This indicates that the interviewers had preconceived assumptions about gender being important in working life. This same kind of standpoint can be detected when it comes to the webpage analysed in this present study: there is a specific section created for women, which implies that women are in need of articles specialised for them. A study connected to this matter

was conducted on news about female politicians by Meeks. She introduces the concept of “novelty labels” (2012: 178), explaining that since women are somehow an anomaly in the sphere of politics, their gender is often mentioned by journalists (Meeks, 2012). This kind of labelling has two opposing sides. On the one hand, it is important that women are recognised and given a voice and visibility when it comes to fields like business and politics. However, on the other hand, as Meeks states in her article, “all novelty labelling in news contexts go some significant distance toward suggesting...that women are novel, unusual, simply different” (2012: 179). Inevitably, then, a contrast between men and women is insinuated, although people should not be judged by their gender but by their abilities and proficiency. Lämsä and Tiensuu found this differentiation of women to be prevalent, and concluded the discussion of this issue by stating that “[t]he woman leader is mainly seen as a representative of her gender, whereas the man is a ‘neutral’ human being” (2002: 372).

In addition to this emphasis on gender, Lämsä and Tiensuu found that a woman leader’s competence was discussed, and the gender equality question was handled. These same themes appear in the articles analysed for the present study, which indicates that they are universal topics that are considered important to acknowledge. Interestingly, it was found that there were three different types of discourses that were used to construct women leaders: patriarchal, victim and professional.

The first one was connected to the “distinctness of women” discussed earlier, as it reinforces gender stereotypes, and pits traditional feminine qualities against traditional masculine ones, putting the latter on a pedestal. The victim discourse acknowledges women as inferior to men in a working context, but “openly and publicly demands a change in power relations” (Lämsä and Tiensuu 2002: 369). The problem that Lämsä and Tiensuu found regarding this type of discourse was that the proposed solution encouraged acting in a masculine

way, which led to the conclusion that “instead of being transformative, the victim discourse appears to reinforce masculinity as a “‘neutral’ norm” (2002: 373). The last type of discourse, the professional one, did not represent gender as a determining factor in career success. The focus of this discourse type was the professional’s qualities, and the company’s success was an important factor.

Risbourg’s (2018) Critical Discourse Analysis about business women representations explored how stereotypes and gender inequality were portrayed in the online version of *The Economist* by considering articles written about two women leaders, Sheryl Sandberg and Mary Barra. The study focused on inspecting lexical choices, word connotation as well as nomination and functionalisation. Additionally, analysis of the photographs of the articles was conducted. My study will be looking at most of the aforesaid textual aspects, so Risbourg’s study is useful when it comes to comparison of results. Consequently, drawing more large scale conclusions about the state of career woman discourses might be possible.

The results of Risbourg’s study showed that the articles about Barra and Sandberg primarily concentrated on the women’s careers, and depicted them as powerful and professional leaders. However, the aforementioned was not the only aspect that was focused on: gender was brought up in distinct ways throughout the articles. Stereotypes regarding gender were visible, as characteristics associated with women were pointed out, and, at the same time, whether the women lacked traditionally masculine attributes like courage was discussed.

Conversely, both women were idealised because of their high positions in fields dominated by men, suggesting their heroic status. The struggles they had faced along the way to success were often mentioned. Additionally, the study found that using words with masculine connotations when describing the two women could be seen as “counter[ing] the gender stereotypes present in society” (Risbourg, 2018: 52). However, the fact that some of the articles

used a tone that was patronising suggested that the women's reputations needed to be protected, and the reader had to be convinced of the competency of Sandberg and Barra. All in all, the study concluded that the two women were portrayed subjectively instead of in a neutral manner, as aspects related to their work were not the only focus of the articles: gender was frequently brought to the fore as well.

Zulkifli's (2015) study about representations of career women in the Malaysian edition of Cleo magazine came to similar conclusions as well. This Critical Discourse Analysis examined articles from a section called Career Coach. Zulkifli's study aimed to determine what linguistic strategies were used to construct the image of career women, and the women's negotiations with values regarding their working environments.

Like in the previous studies presented, gender was also a visible factor in this analysis about a women's magazine: it was found that feminine attributes were highlighted in many of the articles. However, characteristics stereotypically associated with men, such as being aggressive and strong, were considered to be vital requirements for women who wanted to succeed in their working lives, and sometimes concealing femininity was seen as necessary. The sociocultural context was also taken into account; the results showed that the representations of career women in the magazine in question were very Western-like, instead of corresponding to Malaysian standards.

In Risbourg's (2018) study, personal lives were not excluded from the articles, whereas Zulkifli (2015) found that in Cleo, women's lives outside the workplace were not considered. Idealisation was present in this study as well, but in a distinct way: independence and discipline as well as being organised and motivated were factors considered idealistic. Additionally, clear distinctions were made between what is a "right" and a "wrong" way of behaving and operating.

Women seemed to be expected to reach certain standards in order to be adept, and to be regarded as “ideal” one had to be close to perfection.

3. Empirical study: data description

This current study investigates how career women are represented in the European edition of the online magazine *Entrepreneur*. The three articles selected for this research, as well as the ones read for the purposes of background knowledge, are from a section called *Women Entrepreneur* (see Appendix). The selection process included going through several articles, and choosing ones that clearly exhibited various types of linguistic aspects relevant for the analysis. Although the articles were not chosen randomly, the intention was not to find the most stereotypical and gender-biased ones available, either. One of the articles chosen for close inspection is an interview with a successful career woman, Barbara Corcoran (text 1), one is an advice providing article (text 2), and one is a column-type opinion stating article (text 3). All of these articles are recent ones, published between November 2018 and December 2018. The writers of these articles are all women, a fact that should be mentioned but not considered as something that inherently has an effect on the texts. Since gender stereotyping is a matter deeply ingrained in society as a whole, both men and women are guilty of it.

As the name suggests, the magazine in question is directed at entrepreneurs, and the articles deal with latest news about companies as well as advice for business owners, among other things. In addition to the aforementioned section for and about women, there are many other sections on the website as well, some examples being *Financial Management*, *Personal Finance*, *Radicals & Visionaries* and *Young Entrepreneur*. The webpage in question is an online version of multinational magazine: it has ten geographically defined editions, and the paper version appears once a month. The magazine belongs to Bloomberg, and it was founded

in 1973 (Bloomberg, 2019). When it comes to politics, according to AllSides', Bloomberg's "media bias rating is Center" (2014). The workforce of the *Entrepreneur* website has been listed, and almost half of the staff are women (8 out of 17). However, all of the five director positions are occupied by men.

The following subsection will present the aspects that are concentrated on in the analysis, as well as the main approach used, Fairclough's take on CDA, in connection with the present study. Taking into account the page constraints, only the first two levels of his model are focused on. This means that certain textual features are described, and their specific use is interpreted in the context.

3.1 Methodology: focal analytical features

As mentioned previously, this empirical study makes use of Fairclough's (1989, 2003) approach to discourse analysis. The focus is on the first two stages of his model: description and interpretation. In order to unpack ideologies about career women, mere descriptions are not enough; as Fairclough states, linguistic choices need to be inspected more closely "if one's concern is with the social values associated with texts and their elements" (Fairclough, 1989: 141).

Fairclough's (1989, 2003) division between experiential, relational and expressive values of words is not focused on in this study. However, the aspects that he links to these value evaluations - contents, relations and subjects - are all inspected: vocabulary, relations between the genders, as well as representations of subjects, in this case women, are the focal points of the research.

Fairclough divides the aspects of analysis into vocabulary, grammar and textual structures (1989). However, only the first two categories are looked at in this study. They are

considered in connection with Van Leeuwen's (1996) list of aspects to analyse regarding social actors. This means that vocabulary related to subjects is inspected. This is done in a general way, for instance by trying to identify reoccurring adjectives associated with career women. Van Leeuwen's list includes paying attention to nomination and categorisation: "Social actors can be represented either in terms of their unique identity, by being nominated, or in terms of identities and functions they share with others (categorisation)" (1996: 52). Functionalisation is a type of categorisation, occurring "when social actors are referred to in terms of an activity...for instance an occupation or role" (Van Leeuwen, 1996: 54). It is therefore chosen as an object of analysis in this study, since the goal is to identify what types of titles women are given in the articles, and how those lexical choices affect the way the reader perceives them. Ultimately, word choices are described and analysed because they provoke connotations, which in turn contribute to the bigger picture of transmission of ideologies through media.

Additionally, both Van Leeuwen (1996) and Fairclough (2003) discuss inclusion and exclusion of social actors and elements. These will also be inspected in this study. Fairclough states that "[t]here are many motivations for exclusion, such as redundancy or irrelevance, but exclusion may be politically or socially significant" (2003: 149). Taking this into account, careful scrutinising of exclusion must be done in order to unveil the occasions where leaving certain aspects or subjects out of the discourse affects the reader's view of the text. Van Dijk points out that the attitudes of readers are influenced by controlling discourse (1995), and exclusion is one way of doing it. For instance, whether articles dealing with career women discuss women's lives outside the workplace, and whether men are included and in what ways, have implications that will be discussed later in this study.

The last aspect that will be described and analysed in this present research study concerns role allocation. In discourse, social actors can be given an active or a passive role.

Van Leeuwen explains the difference between these two positions by stating that “[a]ctivation occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, passivation when they are represented as ‘undergoing’ the activity, or as being ‘at the receiving end of it’” (1996: 43-44). Therefore, whether career women appear as agents or patients of the clauses in the articles is examined. As many of the previously reviewed studies showed, women are often victimised and characterised as passive. Hence, by scrutinising the roles women are given in the articles, these findings can be further verified or contradicted.

4. Findings

In this section, the results of this empirical study will be discussed, by considering the main patterns of representation that could be detected regarding career women. Although the three articles chosen for this study are of different types, namely, an interview of a successful businesswoman, Barbara Corcoran (text 1), an advice providing article (text 2) and a column type opinion article (text 3), similar aspects reoccur in all of them in slightly different ways. Therefore, I will discuss these characteristics generally, and in the case that there are disparities between articles, those will be pointed out. As mentioned previously, word choices, exclusion and inclusion as well as activation and passivation of social actors will be inspected in the hope of being able to uncover some overarching themes about career women representations in these articles. Following Fairclough’s approach, these aspects were first detected, and then interpreted so that these linguistic features and their underlying implications could be connected.

Firstly, career women were represented as being different in many ways compared to their male counterparts. This was done through lexical choices and word connotations: for instance, the word “different” itself was used to refer to women in one of the articles (text 3)

four times. Additionally, the aspects that were chosen to be included suggest this; men were present in all the articles as points of comparison, and they were made to seem like obstacles for women who want to succeed. For example, Barbara Corcoran was said to not have “let the fact that it was mostly men who were sitting at the top of many major companies stop her from figuring out how to achieve a dream career” (text 1, lines 17-18). Emphasising this distinctness of women implies that still in today’s society men are seen as the “norm” and women as “the Other”. Despite some negative connotations and generalisations that will be discussed later, the main theme of two of the articles (2 and 3) was that women should embrace these differences instead of trying to be more like men: the author of text 2 declares that “[i]t’s time for women to capitalize on our unique advantages as women to succeed and lead in business” (lines 6-7). However, the advice given in the article draws on stereotypes due to the assumption that women are insecure and scared to speak up and take action. Conversely, when it came to the interview article about Barbara Corcoran, the tone was different. She was highly idolised for succeeding in the male dominated field of real estate, and she claimed to have built her business “almost like a man” (text 1, line 26). These two facts combined make it seem like in order to be successful, women need to adopt more masculine ways of acting. Additionally, she was functionalised in the article, presented as “real estate mogul” (line 1), “a Shark Tank star” (line 4) and “a business expert” (line 1). These word choices allude that she is both somehow exceptional, and defined by her career. Therefore, not only were women represented as different from men, but it was alluded that some females also stand out from others because of their masculine business skills.

Secondly, victimisation was clearly present in two of the articles (2 and 3), and the struggles women face in their careers were emphasised in all of them. An example that connects the two aforementioned aspects could be found in text 3, in which the fact that females must

take care of the household and children was considered a matter that impedes women's success in the working life: "These responsibilities work against women, making it more difficult to rise in their career" (lines 30-31). A connected matter to this is that it was implied that women tend to victimise themselves as well. The author of text 2 instructs women to "stop allowing men to appropriate your ideas as their own" (line 38) which suggests that the injustices women face in the workplace are largely their own fault, as they tend to be passive and underestimate themselves. Grammatically speaking, women almost always appeared as agents of sentences, since the dominant theme of the articles was to empower women and encourage them to take control. For instance, when Barbara Corcoran talked about herself, it almost seemed like she emphasised her own agency by repeating the word "I": "I had something far more important than that — I had a dream. I had a clear image of who I wanted to be: I wanted to be the queen of New York real estate" (text 1, lines 14-15). However, victimisation came up when lexical choices were analysed. It could be detected in connection with family and work life balance as well as with male supremacy. Hence, society and men were presented as being culpable for women's struggles; more specific social actors were excluded from the texts when it came to this matter. Sometimes the social actor was excluded altogether: for instance, it was mentioned that "women are being set up for failure" (text 3, line 13), but whether this was done by women themselves or by someone else was left unknown. Regardless, it was implied that women cannot succeed in all aspects of life at the same time, so they need to make sacrifices in one way or another. This is connected to the third way that career women were represented in these articles.

The general consensus seemed to be that combining family and working life is extremely difficult for women, if not almost impossible. In text 2, life outside the workplace was excluded altogether, as the focus of it was to juxtapose women and men in the workplace.

This could be an indication that those women that this article addressed and talked about are hyper-focused on their careers, and that is why it can be taken for granted that work is the most important part of their lives and the only aspect worth discussing. The other two articles discussed the difficulty of work-life balance, and the offered solutions were either not to start a family when building a business (text 1), or to stay at home with children (text 3). Additionally, in text 3, fathers were very much excluded from the discussion about domestic duties like cleaning, cooking and raising children: the assumption seemed to be that women perform all of those tasks, and men's roles were not called into question. Therefore, the patriarchal viewpoint that mothers are the ones who should stay at home while fathers are the breadwinners seems to persist.

Lastly, on the one hand, career women's passivity, emotionality and insecurity were accentuated, but on the other hand, so were their abilities and potential. Passivity was the most significant characteristic: it appeared in all three articles. For instance, the title of text 2 alone - "Women, It's Time to Take Control" - insinuates that women let men lead and just passively accept their position as inferior. The paradox that was present in all the articles was that while they explicitly intended to empower women and encourage them to go after what they want and to be determined, at the same time the tone was patronising, and the implication was that women are helpless and in need of guidance. It was clearly suggested that in order to succeed, women need to possess certain qualities. They were advised to be less apologetic, and to pursue their career goals more ruthlessly (texts 1 and 2). Word choices were once again the clearest indication of women's assumed passivity, such as the nature of verbs used, for instance "allow", "let" and "surrender" (text 2; lines 38, 70, 69). Men were once again presented as the benchmark: the articles compared women and men's speech patterns, and the way each gender builds their careers, the connotation being that men are superior. Emotionality is another

important aspect to mention. Text 2 saw this characteristic both as a positive, an aspect to be treasured, as well as something that clearly complicates women's working lives. First, the article emphasised that "emotional intelligence" (line 9) was vital if one wanted to be a good boss. Later, it was pointed out that women's emotionality also "make[s] [them] wary about displeasing others, risk-averse and bad at dealing with negative feedback" (lines 63-64). Ultimately, career women were characterised in various different ways, but the common denominator was the insinuation about the uniformity of career women; that is, stereotyping was heavily present.

Taking all of the aforesaid characteristics into account, it could be concluded that although the objective of the articles, as well as of the section where these articles appeared, was clearly to empower women, females were often presented as unable to cope with society's expectations. Additionally, men were frequently included as points of comparison and as adversaries.

5. Discussions and conclusions

The aim of the study was to examine recent articles simultaneously about career women and for career women. An online magazine called *Entrepreneur* was chosen as an object of analysis, and the three articles chosen were all published in a section called *Women Entrepreneur*. Using Fairclough's approach to CDA, the study found that career women were represented as different to men, and they were characterised as being passive, emotional and insecure. Alternatively, Barbara Corcoran was idolised in text 1, and it was implied that masculine ways of acting yielded success. Additionally, the study found that career women were victimised in the articles, and they were presented as unable to succeed both at work and at home simultaneously.

Research regarding this topic is scarce, but by comparing the results of the current study to those of previous ones will allow for more comprehensive conclusions to be drawn. Indeed, it was found that the findings of this study align to a great extent with the ones of previous studies.

When it comes to representations of specific career women, Barbara Corcoran, who was interviewed in text 1, was depicted highly similarly as the women in Risbourg's (2018) articles. They were all idolised and put on a pedestal as exceptionally powerful business women. Additionally, the women's personal struggles were highlighted as an attempt to convince the reader that these women are unstoppable despite the burden of patriarchy.

Lämsä and Tiensuu's study detected three different discourse types: patriarchal, victim and professional. The current study found the first two to be present in the articles analysed. Lämsä and Tiensuu's study found generalisation and Othering of women to be a major parts of representing career women as well; however, whereas my articles encouraged women to embrace their differences (text 3), or at least partly drew attention to the positive sides of femininity (text 2), Lämsä and Tiensuu found that women's difference to men was seen as a negative.

Victimisation of women was prevalent in both studies. The intention was clearly to accentuate the inequalities which are the ultimate reasons why women are victimised by others and by themselves. This was especially clear in text 2 of the present study, in which women were both presented as victims and blamed for that. As a consequence, the same pattern occurs: women are victims of patriarchy, so when they succeed, they are heroes. This present study did not find purely professional representations of career women presumably due to the fact that all of the three articles appeared in a section specifically directed at women, so in one way or

another, the emphasis was always on gender. It would be interesting to see whether articles from other sections of the magazine in question still draw clear distinctions between genders.

In terms of the framework used, Zulkifli's (2015) study is the one closest to this paper. Moreover, similar results between the two studies were to be expected, at least regarding text 2, as it was highly similar to those articles that Zulkifli examined. Emphasis on gender, as well as the empowering tone, and the expectation that career women should be strong and outspoken in order to succeed, were aspects present both in Zulkifli's articles as well as in the ones of this study. However, Zulkifli's articles seemed to assume career to be the highest priority for women, whereas the current study found variation when it came to what was implied should be most important for career women: family or work. Additionally, men were included as a benchmark in the articles of both studies. In contrast to my study, Zulkifli does not discuss victimisation as such, although women's struggles were dealt with in her articles as well.

There are a few limitations regarding the present study. Only three articles were analysed, which means that the amount of data available for inspection was limited. Additionally, the emphasis on gender came as a default, as these articles were meant for women to read. It would be interesting to see if articles not derived from this "women's" section of the online magazine also display the same characteristics that were found in the articles analysed for this present research. Moreover, taking into account only one website and section means that the study is very constricted, excluding large amounts of data that might present entirely opposite characteristics.

Because of these substantial limitations, no clear conclusions can be drawn. However, considering the general themes of these three articles, as well as the ones viewed on the website during the process of election, some significant reoccurring patterns could be detected. As mentioned previously, gender was logically emphasised since these articles were presumably

directed at women, considering the section of the magazine they appeared in. Additionally, empowering women to cherish their difference compared to men was a prominent theme. Overall, solely the fact that there is a specific section for women on the website, which makes it seem like the genders operate in completely different ways in their working lives, denotes the need for closer analysis.

6. References

- Bloomberg. (2017, December 28). Retrieved from <https://www.allsides.com/news-source/bloomberg-media-bias>
- Boroditsky, Lera. (2009). How does our language shape the way we think?. In M. Brockman (Ed.), *What's next? Dispatches on the future of science* (pp. 116-129). New York: Vintage.
- Chawdhry, Hina. (2018). *Shifting the Paradigm to Embrace Gender Differences*. Retrieved April 1 2019, from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/323013>.
- Company Overview of Entrepreneur Media, Inc.. Bloomberg. (2019). Retrieved May 15, 2019, from <https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=4592213>.
- Conradie, Marthinus. (2011). Constructing Femininity: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Cosmo. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 29 (4): 401-417.
- Entrepreneur Europe. (n.d.) Retrieved April 1, 2019 from <https://www.entrepreneur.com>.
- Fairclough, Norman. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Routledge.
- Fairclough, Norman. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Jansson, Caroline and Sahlin, Li. 2016. *Fair-skinned and Happy Housewives: How women are portrayed in advertisements in Mexican fashion magazines*. Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, University of Jönköping, School of Education and Communication.
- Lämsä, Annamaija and Tiensuu, Tanja. (2002). Representations of the Woman Leader in Finnish Business Media Articles. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 11 (4): 363-374.
- Meeks, Lindsey. (2012). Is She “Man Enough”? Women Candidates, Executive Political Offices, and News Coverage. *Journal of Communication*, 62 (1): 175-193.
- O’Keeffe, Anne. (2011). Media and Discourse Analysis. In J. Gee & M. Handford (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 441-454). London: Routledge.
- Risbourg, Julie. 2018. *Breaking the 'Glass Ceiling' A Critical Discourse Analysis of How Powerful Businesswomen are Portrayed in The Economist Online*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Jönköping, School of Education and Communication.

- 'Shark Tank's' Barbara Corcoran Says She Built Her Business 'Almost Like a Man'. *Entrepreneur Europe*. (2018). Retrieved April 1, 2019, from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/324877>.
- Smith, Linda. (2018). *Women, It's Time to Take Control*. Retrieved April 1 2019, from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/322749>.
- Solomon, Eva. *Women's Roles in the Media: Attitudes towards Gender Issues in Six Tanzanian Newspapers*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Tampere, International School of Social Sciences.
- Tiainen, Minna. 2009. *Behind the Cosmo-Girl: Women's representations and the brand of Cosmopolitan magazine*. Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Languages.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. (1995). Power and the News Media. In D. Paletz (Ed.), *Political Communication and Action: States, Institutions, Movements, Audiences* (pp. 9-36). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen and H.E. Hamilton (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 352-371). London: Blackwell.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo. (1996). The Representation of Social Actors. In C. R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 32-70). London: Routledge.
- Wodak, Ruth. (2009). Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory, and Methodology. In R. Wodak, & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 1-33). London: Sage.
- Wood, Julia T. (1994). *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender and Culture*. Boston: Cengage.
- Zotos, Yorgos C. and Tsihla, Eirini. (2014). Female Stereotypes in Print Advertising: A Retrospective Analysis. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148: 446-454.
- Zulkifli, Che N. (2015). The Construction of Career Women in *Cleo*: Critical Discourse Analysis. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 208: 53-59.

Appendix

Text 1: Interview (December 2018, by Jaime Catmull)
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/324877>

'Shark Tank's' Barbara Corcoran Says She Built Her Business 'Almost Like a Man'
'You have to go out and grab what you can.'

Real estate mogul and business expert Barbara Corcoran started The Corcoran Group when she was just 23. Despite launching her company at a time when the business world was largely an old boys' club, she managed to grow it into one of the top real estate firms in New York City. I sat down with the Shark Tank star to find out how she did it, and get her advice for any other young women looking to launch a successful business themselves.

Barbara Corcoran grew up with a powerful role model for how to run a business: her mother.

"Everything had its place," the Amazon Business Prime American Express Card spokesperson said about how her mother ran the household. "If she did something more than once, she created a system, almost like a manufacturing person. And she was a wonderful motivator. So she was, in a real way, a great coach [and] leader."

Corcoran credits the lessons she learned from her mother and her intrinsic desire to succeed as the driving forces behind the success of The Corcoran Group.

"A lot of people think you have to have a lot of knowledge to start a business," she said. "I had something far more important than that -- I had a dream. I had a clear image of who I wanted to be: I wanted to be the queen of New York real estate."

She didn't let the fact that it was mostly men who were sitting at the top of many major companies stop her from figuring out how to achieve a dream career.

"The world was owned by the old boys, rich guys that had inherited their businesses from their father and their father before," said Corcoran. "But somehow in my little mind I thought, 'I'm going to be the queen of this town in real estate.' And I moved toward it and moved toward it until one day I was written up in *New York* magazine, and they called me 'the queen of New York real estate.'"

The *Shark Tank* star said she would not have been able to become a success in the business world if she hadn't waited until later in life to start a family.

"When I built my business, I built it almost like a man," said Corcoran. "I had no children, I didn't have a marriage, and I hyper-focused on building my business from the time I was 23. So in a real way I had no other concerns. I had my first child at 46, and I can tell you, once I started my family I could have never built the business I built if I had been a mother early. I just wouldn't have had the concentration, I wouldn't have had the total dedication. I would have been equally inspired to be a phenomenal mother, and that's a division of labor, thought and a division of your heart."

The mogul advises any other aspiring small business owners to make sure they have a plan in place to deal with a limited cash flow when getting their company up and running.

"Here's what goes on with a small business: You have big dreams, you want to push forward, your sales are increasing -- and what gets in the way is cash flow," she said. "You just can't seem to make enough money to make it through the next three months relative to what your expenses are. It puts people out of business. [A business credit card like] the Amazon Business American Express card eliminates that possibility, because in essence, it operates almost as a standing credit line for a small business owner. That's phenomenal."

Corcoran hopes to inspire other young women who want to start their own business to follow their passion.

“My best tip if you’re a young, working woman is dream about what you want to do, and find a way to do it,” she said. “The only sad people I’ve ever met in life are the people who wish they shoulda, woulda, coulda. You don’t want to be one of those. The best motivation in the world is just to open yourself up to life and say, ‘What do I really want to do? What do I really dream about? How the heck am I going to get there?’ And take a shot at it. You have to go out and grab what you can. You only go around once.”

Click through for more advice from your money champion on how to live a richer life.

Text 2: Advice (November 2018, by Linda Smith)

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/322749>

Women, It's Time to Take Control

You are a smart, talented leader. Unleash your power.

Women, it's time for us to suit up. We need to harness our unique feminine advantages as women to dominate in business. After years of trying to show we are equal to men, we have not made any progress. Why? Women have been playing by the wrong playbook -- the male playbook. The rules of that playbook are rigged against us.

We need to start using our own playbook to change things. No more “learning in” or “outmanning the men” or “beating the men at their own game.” It's time for women to capitalize on our unique advantages as women to succeed and lead in business.

Those unique feminine advantages have nothing to do with our sexuality. Rather, we have a weapon that is far more potent. Research has shown that emotional intelligence is key for being a successful business leader. Of the 12 competencies researchers have developed as key markers of the emotional intelligence required for leadership, women score higher than men in 11 out of the 12. And on the 12th we're tied with men. We don't just excel in the warm and fuzzy skills. We come out ahead of men in hard business skills traditionally associated with men like “driving for results” and “taking initiative.” It's time for us to transform the gender rules by using these superior leadership skills to advance our careers.

Here's how to move forward:

1. Suit up using your emotional intelligence.

Combining intelligence, empathy and emotions magnifies our capacity for analysis and our comprehension of interpersonal dynamics. We can use these superior leadership skills to read the emotions and motivations of the people we are dealing with, gauge the situation strategically, choose a nuanced course of action and take control.

2. Stand up with confidence.

Confidence trumps competence every time. How many times in a meeting has a man, who clearly doesn't have a clue what he's talking about, speak with the utmost certainty and end up drawing praise and respect from his audience? Why? Study after study shows that success in the business world requires more than competence. Our efforts to demonstrate that we deserve promotion, compensation and success based on merit are misguided because business is not a meritocracy. Confidence beats competence.

The good news is that confidence is a skill, and like any other skill, it can be acquired. Step one is to just do it. Act as if you exude self-confidence. Fake it until you become it. Walk the walk and talk the talk.

3. Shut up that internal critical voice.

Stop self-sabotage. Society has been drilling male supremacy into us since we were little girls, and we've internalized it and convinced ourselves to buy into the patriarchy by giving away our power. All too often, we are our own worst enemy. This internal voice sews seeds of self-doubt, fear of failure and the fear of being revealed as a fraud. Ruthlessly target those thoughts, consciously shut them down and replace them with self-affirmative, encouraging talk.

4. Speak up.

If you have an idea or disagree with what's being said, speak up. Shut down mansplaining and maninterrupting and stop allowing men to appropriate *your* ideas as their own. When you are speaking, do not yield, and call out any man who interrupts you. If necessary, bluntly say "Stop interrupting me and let me finish."

When you talk, make sure to use empowering language that exudes confidence. Never apologize before you speak. The word "sorry" should be banished from your vocabulary. Similarly, never caveat what you are about to say with prefaces such as "I'm not sure but" or "I might be wrong but." Use direct, forceful language.

Male speech patterns are more assertive, direct and succinct. Women's speech patterns are perceived as weak, unassertive, and tentative. Use short sentences. This makes it harder for people to interrupt you.

Remember that body language matters. Make your physical presence known: Lean forward at the table, point to the person you've chosen to acknowledge for a comment, put the flats of your hands on the table to make a point and look that person squarely in the eye or stand up and walk to the front of the room -- whatever it takes.

5. Step up.

Opportunities are rarely handed to you on a plate. Remember that if you don't ask for it, you won't get it. How will you ever achieve your goals if you only perform those assignments you are handed? Ask for what you want -- plum assignments, leadership roles, salary increases and promotions. Take risks and advocate for yourself. Take the hard job even if it's a stretch for you. If you don't, some man will. When you are assigned a major project, dive into it and take charge.

6. Show up.

Reaching a goal is usually a marathon, not a sprint. Demonstrate the tenacity to continuously prove yourself. Seize the next challenge and keep achieving. Push back against those who deny you what you need.

7. Smarten up.

Focus on earning respect, not popularity. As women, we tend to be people-pleasers and hypersensitive to nuance. The same emotional sensitivity that gives us our high emotional intelligence also make us wary about displeasing others, risk-averse and bad at dealing with negative feedback. Understand that success is not a popularity contest. Women have to learn to withstand disapproval and criticism and, when necessary, to take hard, contrary positions. The most likable people are not regarded as leaders. Instead, to achieve success be respected, decisive and inspiring.

Let's get started. Women do not have to put up with male domination any longer. It's time to stop surrendering control to the men around you, letting them order you around or allowing them to treat

you with disrespect as if you are of a lower social status than they are. You are a smart, talented leader. Unleash your power.

Text 3: Column/opinion (November 2018, by Hina Chawdry)
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/323013>

Shifting the Paradigm to Embrace Gender Differences

By failing to take into account how women are different, I believe that women are being set up for failure.

In 2018, it is increasingly important for both men and women to discuss gender roles. While these conversations may be uncomfortable, they go a long way in creating norms and behaviors in our society.

The current narrative in these discussions, however, isn't ideal. One simple Google search shows how easy it is to find articles about women's self-worth, confidence and being successful in the workplace. And while it is also easy to find articles about how women are the same as men (and should not think otherwise), it is more difficult to find discussions of how women are *different* and why those differences are important.

Societal pressures

Women are in a precarious situation. The societal consensus is that women are expected to "do it all," meaning a proper "work-life balance" and the ability to multitask on many activities.

We aren't asking this important question: *Can women really do it all?*

I believe that women are being set up for failure.

Society has unrealistic gender expectations. "Success" is measured in terms of everything that men do and provide. As women, we have no choice but to keep striving to be more like them -- even though we are stretched thin due to our childbearing and child-rearing responsibilities. That said, women are different than men. We are biologically different. Society needs to understand and appreciate those differences.

These distinctions are especially critical when discussing children. The glory and seriousness of motherhood are lost. Society treats the unique and beautiful act of creating life as an impediment or chore.

What's lost is that women have unique capabilities in having and raising children. This job is extremely important for society, as mothers take a prominent role in creating and instilling values in the next generation. Teaching children basic responsibilities like cleaning, cooking and washing is critical for their short- and long-term development. By taking a macro view, it is clear that no other job carries such massive consequences for our world.

Notwithstanding this important role, women hesitate to have children. Often, this is because of pressures and biases at work. Annual reviews often do not account for women's responsibilities for caring for their children (or even elderly parents). These responsibilities work against women, making it more difficult to rise in their career.

Strive for individuality, not equality

Considering all of this, the debate shouldn't be whether men and women are superior or inferior to each other.

Rather, we should focus on what both genders have to offer to improve our workplaces and homes.

As a society, we need to return to the basics. If a woman decides to stay at home, both genders must understand and recognize the mother's service and sacrifice. As a mother, the work is endless, whether it's preparing meals or snacks, dressing the children, cleaning the house or taming temper tantrums.

This is the full-time job that often is unappreciated or neglected. There are no "days off" or sick days. If there is work, it must be done -- no matter how the mother is feeling.

So, how can we see value in motherhood again? How can we change the narrative where being the main breadwinner is *not* the only value-added activity?

One solution is creating a better support system for women. Within this support system, men must take an active role. Both men and women need to discuss their expectations, the type of children they want to raise, and deeper questions, like what it means to raise a good human. These discussions will ensure that the mother's role is more greatly appreciated.

In the workplace, companies should create better daycare facilities and embrace flexible work hours. Along with this, they should provide counseling opportunities for new mothers who are returning to the workforce. Maternity leave is another big issue. America is woefully behind many other countries, which often offer one year of maternity leave. American organizations need to offer at least three months (if not more) of maternity leave.

By taking these steps, corporations can signal that they value motherhood and will support their female employees who want to have children.

The importance of appreciation

Women need to feel that they are celebrated and appreciated. This, in turn, leads to happy marriages and a happy workforce.

But this shouldn't be a passive activity. Women should be shameless and raise their voice for what is important to them. Ultimately, we need to shift the societal paradigm and set different bars of success.

And as women, we need to look at ourselves and say: *We are the privileged ones. We must stop judging other women and stop being hard on them. We find our own happiness and find joy in our own lives.*

(By Hina Chawdhry. Chawdhry is a tax manager at BDO USA LLP.)